



ARCTIC TRUTH

Celebrating 50 Years of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

~ November 19, 2010 ~

Each week leading up to the **Arctic National Wildlife Refuge's 50th Anniversary** on December 6, 2010, we will be sending you an Arctic Truth newsletter highlighting an **Arctic Hero**, an **Arctic bird** that migrates from the Refuge to other states in the U.S., and other news about why the Arctic Refuge deserves the strongest possible protections.



Arctic Hero

Jonathan Solomon was a Gwich'in tribal leader who helped lead the fight to keep oil drilling out of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for decades. Solomon became politically active in the 1960s when he fought a proposal to dam the Yukon River, which would have flooded 10 Athabaskan villages on the Yukon Flats. Starting in the 1970s he fought to keep drilling out of the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge, and particularly to protect the Porcupine caribou. Solomon believed that the future of the Gwich'in people depended on the herd's welfare. In the mid-1980s, Canada and the United States reached an agreement to protect the herd. Mr. Solomon was a key negotiator of the agreement. As Solomon stated, "It is our belief that the future of the Gwich'in and the future of the caribou are the same. We cannot stand by and let them sell our children's heritage to the oil companies."

Arctic Bird

The **White-Crowned Sparrow** is a fairly common bird that breeds in the Arctic Refuge and select locations in the United States like Utah. The White-Crowned Sparrow is recognizable from the bold pattern of stripes on its head. During migration season they have been observed traveling up to 300 miles in one night, with those native to Alaska traveling a total of 2,600 miles in one season. White-Crowned Sparrows native to Alaska are also distinguishable by their orange bills and white or gray on each side of their face..



Arctic Action

This week, 25 Senators, led by Senators Joe Lieberman (I-CT), Mark Udall (D-CO) and Tom Udall (D-NM), [sent a letter](#) to President Obama asking him to do all he can to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Also this week, a number of leading conservation organizations [called on President Obama](#) to declare the Arctic Refuge a national monument—the strongest step Obama could take to protect the Refuge. As the Refuge faces greater threats in the upcoming Congress, designating it a national monument would take this iconic area out of the energy debate and strengthen its place in America's natural legacy. If you have not already done so, you can show your support for protecting this important area by **cosponsoring H.R. 39/S. 231, the Arctic wilderness bill**, which would designate the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge as wilderness.



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